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ABSTRACT

The use of performance appraisal (PA) as part of a performance management system at the college level is discussed, and a process model to implement PA through staff development is presented. Through PA, the supervisor and employee develop a framework for identifying job duties and responsibilities, goals and objectives, and performance measures. The PA process involves a formal communication between supervisor and the employee in which expectations are clarified. The proposed PA implementation model is based on an employee growth and development approach that considers change as a process and utilizes an adult education approach to change implementation. PA is a process of helping others learn and develop at work through participation and collaboration in an atmosphere of mutual respect and critical reflection. The contextual variables of individual institutions are discussed. The following elements of a PA implementation model are considered: design, development, installation, training, pilot testing, maintenance, and evaluation. Research evidence supporting the model is summarized, and ways to enhance the PA implementation process are considered. A four-page bibliography is included. (SW)

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS:

A PROCESS MODEL

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Abstract

This paper presents a model that describes a process for the implementation of performance appraisal for higher education administrators through staff development. By utilizing staff development to design and develop a performance management system, the educational process is being used to implement a more effective administration of educational systems. The model suggests a collaborative development approach which considers the contextual variables of individual institutions. By involving the intended user in the design and development phases, the implementation process has the benefit of greater involvement and commitment by institutional members, two critical variables in the learning process. Research evidence supporting the model is summarized and crucial conditions under which this process might be facilitated are described. Several principles for enhancing the performance appraisal implementation process are also outlined.

Introduction

The heightened demand for greater accountability by higher education institutions has led to an increasing emphasis on performance appraisal for administrators. Four year, public higher education institutions face retrenchment with a paradoxical growth in specific disciplines; thus the scarcity of resources in one area is coupled with an abundance of resources in another area, creating a demand for more informed and professional human resource management and planning. Administrators, pressured to innovate and do more with less, are examining the appraisal of employee job performance as a possible alternative to this problem situation, for there is a belief that performance appraisal and the development of administrators will yield more effective institutional management (i.e. planning, leading, organizing and controlling), thus utilizing all resources more efficiently (Farmer, 1979; Nordvall, 1979).

This paper presents a perspective on the purpose of performance appraisal within the context of a performance management system in a higher education institution. A process model for effective program implementation is proposed in hopes of clarifying aspects of this change process. The implications of this staff development model are considered in light of current research.

Performance Management

Performance appraisal is a process of identifying, evaluating and developing human performance in organizations (Schneier and Beatty, 1979). It is an integral part of an effective performance management system which includes setting objectives, performance appraisal, training and development, and human resource planning (for the institution) and career planning (for the individual). Wexley and Latham (1981) note that performance appraisal serves as a contract between the organization and an employee in that it makes explicit what is required of that individual. As such, performance appraisal is often used to accomplish many purposes including salary determination, promotion, layoffs, reassignments, disciplinary actions and employee development (Morrisey, 1983). However, it is these conflicting, multiple uses which contribute to the problems with performance appraisal.

Cummings and Schwab (1973) have identified two purposes of performance appraisal: evaluation and development. The evaluative function, which focuses on past performance in order to improve performance through more effective personnel and reward administration, requires a supervisor who is judgmental and an employee who is passive or reactive while the developmental purpose focuses on an improvement in future performance through self-learning and growth. The supervisor's role is that of counselor and the employee is actively involved in the learning.

Morrisey has identified performance appraisal for development purposes as the only application that has high value added

benefit for all three affected groups -- the organization, the supervisor and the individual employee: "The real key to effective use of objectives and results for employee development purposes lies in its motivational impact. The mutual involvement of the employee and his or her immediate supervisor in the setting of meaningful growth objectives is the most significant step in the process" (p.8). Thus the purpose of performance appraisal is to provide feedback in order to maintain or improve performance. Combining performance feedback and specific goal setting based on this feedback, performance appraisal accomplishes its two most important functions, counseling and developing employees (Wexley and Latham, 1981).

In academic institutions, there are many reasons given for not doing performance appraisal. Three major reasons include:

1. ambiguity and diversity in jobs, programs and leadership roles;
2. lack of skill in effective communication and administration skills;
3. performance appraisal is a political process where a good rapport is more a matter of appeasing constituencies than competent performance.

(Farmer, 1979)

Each argument has a rebuttal, beginning with accepting the realities of the environment (ambiguous, diverse roles) and utilizing flexibility in the appraisal process and improving the communication process through greater collaboration. Dressel (1976) lists four major problems in any appraisal effort: "1) the definitions of administration in terms of the related concepts of management and leadership; 2) the determination of the power that

an administrator has in light of the great variances in legal and hierarchical frameworks of higher education institutions so that the evaluation properly relates to the administrator's functions and the authority he or she is delegated to fulfill them; 3) the lack of generally accepted clear criteria for determining successful administration; and 4) the fact that in dealing with multiple constituencies administrators often purposely communicate in ambiguous ways" (pp. 376-82).

MacVittie (1975) noted that there is growing evidence of interest throughout the United States in the more formal evaluation of college and university presidential leadership; Farmer (1979) observed that the statement is even more valid today and that it is no longer limited to presidential leadership for all levels of administration are being scrutinized. Hanley (1975) said "...you have no choice as to whether you will be evaluated. Willy-nilly, you will be, and so will every administrator. It seems to me to be part of wisdom to have a say in how and when the evaluation takes place." Appraisal, however, is an ongoing process, whether or not a formal system exists within the institution, for opinions are often expressed about the level and quality of the work of others. Given the reasons for performance appraisal, it is difficult to understand the fact that organizations that are dedicated to the training and development and evaluation of students have been so slow to train and develop and evaluate their own administrators (Sprunger and Bergquist, 1978; Millett, 1978). Castetter (1976) suggests the following general principles for performance evaluation:

.Results of performance evaluations should be used to discuss performance and progress of personnel in relation to specific goals.

.Performance strengths should be recognized and weaknesses identified so that individual action plans can be developed to make the needed corrections.

.Supervisors should be thoroughly trained in the purpose and use of the performance evaluation program.

(p.198)

Farmer (1979) developed three clusters of administrator performance evaluation functions from a group of twelve based upon the work of Genova etal (1976) and Sprunger and Bergquist (1978). The three major categories of functions, formative, summative and institutional can be used as the rationale for implementing administrator performance appraisal in the institution. Formative functions of appraisal provide feedback in order to maintain or improve performance through the development of diagnostic information to the individual or groups. This is an ongoing process of communication and problem solving. This summative functions are the after-the-fact decision-making for personnel administration as well as overall appraisal of unit or department effectiveness. The third cluster of functions, institutional, has a broader focus than the first two because it effects more than a single or group of administrators. These functions concern the institution as a whole for they are organizational in focus, reflecting policy and the collective actions of the institutional members. The three clusters of functions feed into each other; data developed in the formative functions provides information for the summing up for personnel administration and overall unit or department

effectiveness rating. This information provides the rationale for policy formulation and action by the institution.

In higher education "the emphasis on the problems of diversity for an evaluation process highlights the underlying theme of those who stress the difficulties: education is not only different from other fields, so that procedures from these fields cannot be superimposed onto education, but also higher education, by the very nature of the way it should be organized to achieve its goals, will be particularly resistant to formal evaluation methods" (Nordvall, 1979, p.7). Despite the difficulties, Nordvall notes that administrator evaluation programs are growing in number.

An outgrowth of effective evaluation should be an administrator development program (Nordvall, 1979). Identifying areas which require improvement or further development leads to questions of how they can be resolved. Furthermore, individual development programs often lead to organization development, a long-term process of improving an organization's problem solving capacities. Effective performance appraisal often increases trust among employees and enhances the communication process and leadership effectiveness through open confrontation about performance problems and better problem solving to accomplish goals (Boyer and Grasha, 1978; Fisher, 1977b; French, 1969; Richardson, 1975). Administrator development programs are viewed as less threatening and raise little resistance, yet the movement from individual to organization development requires a commitment to change that could be more threatening (Nordvall, 1979). It is this threat to the status quo, the possibility of

change involving the institution, which makes administrator development inherently more threatening than effective evaluation.

A review of models of systems to evaluate administrators in higher education reveal several common factors. Bergquist and Tenbrink (1978), surveying 400 American colleges and universities, have identified six major problems used in administrator evaluation:

1. Unstructured narration
2. Unstructured documentation
3. Structured narration
4. Rating scales
5. Structured documentation
6. Management by objectives

Gauthier and Skebba (1985) cite the need for accountability, employee development and communication in evaluation programs. Communication and directives to establish personnel goals and expectations (Barnette, 1985), communication, clarity of expectations, measurement methods and the use of results (Baum, 1983) and communication of purpose, approach, criteria and general policies (Berendzen, 1981; Ryan, 1979) are all related by a common communication requirement which includes involvement of the participants in the whole process.

When an institution implements a system, goal setting, communication (upward, downward and parallel), clarity of expectations and understanding about the purpose and uses of performance evaluation should all be included as critical

elements of the process (Ripple, 1980; Farmer, 1979; Nordvall, 1979; Ryan, 1979; Fisher, 1977; Anderson, 1977; O'Mahoney, 1978). The collaborative approach of ratee and rater, assisting in setting performance standards depends upon ratee submission of reports of accomplishments, activities and tasks performed and self-ratings; rater performance counseling, submitting formal appraisal to his or her supervisor, describing performance observations and recommending training and development; and supervisor of raters providing feedback to the raters (Bernardin and Beatty, 1984).

Anderson (1975) reviewed a performance appraisal program of key senior administrators by college and university Board of Trustees. Actual performance was assessed in a portfolio review which included self-assessments and statements from constituents. Wilson and Kroesser (1980) noted that a narrative self evaluation, combined with administrative office evaluation, administrator evaluation by supervisors and summaries of data was included in the performance appraisal process. The emphasis in these processes is on including as much relevant information in the review process for more accurate evaluations. Winschel (1979) has noted the difficulty in developing rational and objective judgments; Fisher (1977) states that individual methods or models depend upon the particular institution and setting. Thus, the more information garnered for the review the more accurate and comprehensive the performance appraisal process. They point out the final major area of consideration in the process of appraisal: trust. Trust is intricately related to perceptions of accuracy and fairness in appraisal and it is

critical to assess this in the context of whether measures of performance can be obtained to accurately assess a person's performance in a given job. If low levels of trust are expressed by the future raters and ratees, Bernardin and Beatty (1984) suggest using a demonstration project to test the control procedures of the system (i.e. feedback by supervisors of the raters). Training programs which address the task and process of performance appraisal are also advised.

Beatty and Bernardin (1984) recognize the necessary commitment of time and effort on the part of members of the organization, but without this commitment, no performance appraisal system will work effectively. They note that once raters become comfortable with the system, the required effort should be reduced; rater acquisition of skills in performance appraisal, goal setting, standard setting, observation and communication, will make the task easier. But it is a skill which requires patience and practice in developing. All participants in the process will perceive that this extra effort is worthwhile if they are given sufficient time to conduct their appraisals and, when they are held accountable for performance appraisal, they will be committed to improving the effectiveness of the process.

The organizational characteristics affect the performance appraisal system and play a vital role in determining and implementing a performance management process (Carroll and Schneier, 1982). These characteristics also play a vital role in adult learning. Contextual variables are outside the structure

of the performance appraisal system yet they play a critical role in the process. The reasons for performance appraisal should be explored in the light of each institution as well as individual work areas. Performance appraisal typically conjures up negative emotions based upon past experience or organizationally-developed norms. These must be addressed if there is to be any chance of successfully implementing performance appraisal in the institution. Studies of effective learning in organizations have continually stressed the need for employees to be aware of underlying assumptions, norms and uncritically accepted practices and to be encouraged to imagine alternative structures and practices (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Saint, 1982). Encouraging employees to be proactive in advocating change and innovation is based upon their critical scrutiny of the process.

A Process Model

The most difficult task in implementing a performance appraisal (PA) process in the institution is defining and limiting the goals of PA and informing all participants in the process about the purpose, goals and technical aspects of PA. Recent research recognizes that in order for PA to be a management tool which is used, it must be seen as effective in meeting users' needs. PA is a complex process which requires informed supervisors who are trained in procedures as well as given the opportunity to design and develop it. The system should be understandable to those who are expected to use it, thus explaining it to the users enhances its acceptability.

The process model for implementing PA for administrators in higher education institutions which is described below

emphasizes the effectiveness of a collaborative approach.

It has been noted in the PA literature that although employee involvement is time-consuming, both supervisors and employees are probably more satisfied with the entire process and that there is more open communication when there is collaboration. Collaboration is also consistent with the overall management style in higher education institutions. This collabortative atmosphere is conducive to an adult education process for the implementation of PA for administration in higher education institutions.

Brookfield (1986) suggests six principles of effective practice in facilitating learning:

1. Participation in learning is voluntary; it may be that the circumstances prompting the learning are external to the learner (changes in the work environment, job loss, divorce) but the decision to learn is the learner's. Situations where adults are coerced, bullied or intimidated into learning are excluded.

2. Effective practice is characterized by a respect among participants for each other's self-worth. This does not mean that criticism should be absent from educational encounters, but it does mean that an attention to increasing adults' sense of self-worth underlies all facilitation efforts.

3. Facilitation is collaborative, a cooperative enterprise in which, at different times and for different purposes, leadership and facilitation will be assumed by different group members. This collaboration is seen in the diagnosis of needs, in the setting of objectives, in curriculum development, in methodological aspects, and in generating evaluative criteria and indexes. This collaboration is constant, with the participants involved in a continual renegotiation of activities and priorities in which competing claims are explored, discussed and negotiated.

4. Praxis, a process which centers on the need for educational activity to engage the learner in a continuous and alternating process of investigation, and exploration, followed by action grounded in this exploration, followed by reflection on this action, followed by further action, and so on, is central to adult learning. An example of praxis would be learners becoming acquainted with skills, applying them at work, reflecting with other learners on their workplace experiences with the skills, redefining how these skills might be altered by context, reapplying the skills in workplace settings, etc.

5. Facilitation aims to foster in adults a spirit of critical reflection. Through educational encounters, learners come to appreciate that values, beliefs, behaviors and ideologies are culturally transmitted and that they are provisional and relative. This awareness that the supposed givens of work conduct, relationships, and political allegiances are, in fact, culturally constructed means that adults will come to question many aspects of their professional, personal and political lives.

6. The aim of facilitation is the nurturing of self-directed, empowered adults who see themselves as proactive, initiating individuals engaged in a continuous re-creation of their personal relationships, work worlds and social circumstances rather than as reactive individuals, buffeted by uncontrollable forces of circumstance. (pp.9-11).

In a discussion of these six principles, Brookfield explains them in terms of adult education practice. Voluntary learning, adults' willingness to learn, means that they will be more receptive to participative learning techniques. This is important when you are encouraging adults to be more flexible in their attitudes. When participatory learning techniques are ignored, participants tend to be mentally absent, not actively engaged with the ideas, skills and knowledge being discussed. This is a common occurrence when the concerns and experiences of the participants are not included in the process.

A respect for participant's self worth and individuality characterizes good facilitation which includes the development of

critical reflection powers. Knowles (1980) notes that setting a climate for learning in which adults feel free to challenge one another and feel comfortable with being challenged is one of the most difficult (yet essential) tasks of the facilitator.

The collaborative spirit is demonstrated in needs assessment, objective setting, learning methods and evaluation procedures. The responsibility for posing questions, identifying materials, suggesting priorities and organizing group process can be shared by participants which involves all participants in the process and reduces the pressure on any one individual for total responsibility. Praxis, action and reflection, engages the participants in continuous and alternating processes of investigation and exploration. This is central to adult learning for it places the exploration of new ideas, skills or bodies of knowledge within the context of participants' past, current and future experiences. In an organizational context, participants are acquainted with skills, apply them in the actual work setting and reflect upon their experiences in the work setting with other participants. They redefine how these skills might be altered by context and reapply them at the worksite. Activities that are primarily concerned with change praxis is applicable.

In terms of critical reflection, facilitating learning is a collaborative process where the educator prompts in learners a sense of the culturally constructed nature of knowledge, beliefs, values and behaviors. In order to develop this awareness, alternative interpretations of the participants' work

lives must be presented. Here, Brookfield draws the distinction between training and education. Training requires adults to assimilate a set of clearly defined skills in the manner prescribed by the trainer. In education, adults are encouraged to examine the assumptions underlying the acquisition of skills, to consider alternative purposes, and to place skill acquisition in some broader context. Education, centrally concerned with the development of a critically aware frame of mind, is not an uncritical assimilation of previously defined skills or bodies of knowledge.

Finally, self direction is not merely learning how to apply techniques of resource location or instructional design, but a matter of learning how to change our perspectives, shift our paradigms and replace one way of interpreting the world with another. Argyris and Schon (1978) developed this concept as double-loop learning, in which employees become critically aware of the norms and assumptions underlying organizational structures. It is this kind of activity which produces the most valuable learning.

PA is a learning process in that supervisor and employee develop a framework for identifying job duties and responsibilities, goals and objectives, and measures of performance. It provides the participants with an opportunity to discuss the specifics of the job, resources required to accomplish the objectives and clarifies the role of each in the process. It helps the supervisor and employee identify potential problem areas and determine strategies to address the problems. The purpose of adult education facilitation "is to assist

individuals to begin to exercise control over their own lives, their interpersonal relationships, and the social forms and structures within which they live" (Brookfield, 1986, p.291). This does not mean that it enables adults to exert complete control over all aspects of their world, but it does mean that they can develop more meaningful and authentic lives when they feel they have some proactive role in creating their world. When the supervisor is willing to consider alternatives to the properly prevailing norms governing correct professional behaviors, and employees participate in a recreation of the conditions of work, this is adult education practice. It is the most valuable learning in the workplace because it takes place at the immediate worksite in a crucial environment to the employee.

The collaborative PA process incorporates a concept of facilitation which includes the following characteristics:

.a respect for participants in the transaction.
.a collaborative mode of process development.
.an acknowledgement of the educational value of life experiences.
.a critical analysis which prompts participants to consider alternative perspectives on their work lives.

The critical analysis characteristic is the most difficult and challenging, yet it is the most crucial element in the adult education process. Lefkoe (1985) argues that

> "if participants are able to create a new context for themselves, a new way of seeing themselves or of defining their roles in a work or social situation, they will take it upon themselves to do and learn most of the things required to operate within that new context" (p.45).

He suggests that this process will "lead participants to discover

that their job actually consists of (and has always consisted of) more than the mechanical tasks they have been performing" (p.45).

Utilizing the adult education approach described above in the implementation of PA can minimize the major problems with the process for it addresses the common arguments against PA and facilitates the reasons for its implementation. Adult learning in the workplace is often hampered by a training approach which is imposed upon participants. There is a set of clearly identified skills which are transmitted and the adults are required to assimilate these skills in a manner prescribed by the organization. When participants compliment each other, repeat the public norms of the organization and confirm prejudices, it is a useless exercise. It becomes a valuable experience when there is an honest expression of differences, in an atmosphere where challenge and dissension are accepted as part of the educational process (Brookfield, 1986).

This does not mean that one cannot learn in a training context. As Brookfield notes "the point is that education is centrally concerned with the development of a critically aware frame of mind, not with the uncritical assimilation of previously defined skills or bodies of knowledge" (p.17). This notion of challenging existing norms, practices and structures by organizational members at all levels is essential to the survival and success of the institution. If learning at the worksite is to be effective, then it is necessary for employees to be aware of the underlying assumptions, norms and uncritically accepted practices and to be encouraged to imagine alternative structures

and practices. Peters and Waterman (1982) observed that the lessons derived from an analysis of successful organizations included a willingness to experiment, an engagment in praxis, participatory involvement of all employees, and managers' acknowledgement of ambiguity. There are lessons for all to learn in these observations.

Contextual and Organizational Variables and PA

Why is PA for administrators being considered by the institution? As this question is explored, the expectations of all participants should be considered. At this point, unreasonable expectations can be identified and clarified. Providing participants with an opportunity to express their concerns and to participate in discussions concerning PA for administrators in the institution enhances the process. It also provides a format for adequately addressing their concerns.

What purpose will PA for administrators serve in the institution? There should be a consideration of the users' needs in order to make PA an effective and meaningful process in the institution. If multiple purposes are developed, potential conflicts can be identified and addressed.

Do all PA participants recognize that implementation is continuous, involving design, installation and maintenance? It is important that the users understand the system; therefore it should be explained in terms that are understandable and acceptable to the users. The implementation process should be flexible for there are no two organizations, departments, or work units that will implement PA in exactly the same way. Recognizing that there is no one best way to do PA and providing

alternatives which recognize the differences within the institution is important for a viable PA system.

Is the PA program consistent with the management philosophy and practice of the institution? PA should not conflict with the nature of managerial work in the organization and it should be included in the job responsibilities and functions of management. The PA program should comply with legal requirements. PA program administrators should be identified and made known to all participants. The PA process should not conflict with its stated purposes or other human resource programs. Planning for PA implementation should include scheduling considerations in order to avoid the stress of introducing several programs at the same time.

Is top level administration supportive of the PA program? Their visible commitment to the process, including the necessary resource allocation for program implementation and active participation in the process, integrate PA into the mainstream of the institution. Incorporating PA and the resultant development of employees into each supervisor's responsibilities also enhances commitment to the process. In most academic institutions, management is made up of 'working supervisors' who are expected to manage the work as well as generate it. In the final analysis, will the emphasis still be on work production rather than the management of it? This should not only be acknowledged, but it should be compensated for by senior administration. It is crucial to give PA enough time to develop in the organization and to gain participant receptiveness; top

level administration support and commitment to this long term process is vital to successful PA implementation.

These questions are difficult and require ongoing redefinition and resolution. However, if they are not explored with great consideration, the PA program may never make the transition from paper to practice.

The PA Implementation Process Model: An Adult Education Approach

The PA implementation process is more than installing a program; it includes initial discussions as to the purpose and objectives of the system as well as design, development, installation, maintenance and evaluation on an ongoing basis. Nordvall (1979) notes that for higher education institutions, which exist to develop and enhance students and requires their evaluation, the PA process should not be seen only as a means to the end of better management, but as a goal which is identical to a major goal of the institution. Thus the process should be more amenable to implementation when an employee growth and development approach is utilized.

The elements of a PA implementation model include design; development; installation and training; pilot testing; maintenance and evaluation (Figure 1). A brief description of each element follows.

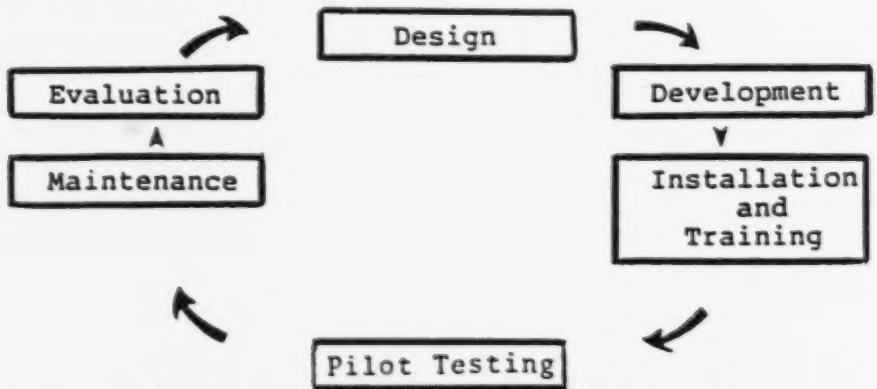

Figure 1 PA Implementation Model

Design

The design of the PA process, which includes measurement and feedback procedures, is dependent upon the primary purpose and context of the system in the institution. Although there is a temptation to begin developing procedures and forms at this point, clarification of the reasons for and purpose of PA will enhance the process over time. Top level administration participation (through small group discussions, position papers, memos and meetings) in the exploration of these questions, although time-consuming and difficult at times, will contribute to the overall success of the program. Exploring PA as a process which can contribute to the effective administration of the institution as well as growth and development of employees is essential before a decision is made to implement PA for administrators in the institution. This provides an opportunity to uncover misconceptions or unrealistic expectations about PA which could diminish the process at a later point.

Other considerations in this phase include how to evaluate administrators, taking into account job analysis or job description review, identifying key duties and responsibilities establishing objectives and specific and mutually agreeable goals and developing measures of performance for each job function. Establishing the parameters for communicating expectations, observations, recording and evaluating performance is another consideration in the design phase. This is an important decision for it defines the characteristics of the process as well as determines the basic feedback and review process. The

contextual information is also part of this determination and can be used to assess the feasibility of the process before it is implemented throughout the institution. Additional considerations during the design phase include the approach that will fit the function in the institution, and who should evaluate administrators.

Development

The development stage includes consideration of the design and contextual variables and involves the following design tasks:

1. Drafting an organizational PA policy
2. Conducting job analysis
3. Developing the appropriate forms and worksheets
4. Establishing monitoring procedures
5. Making the link with other human resource programs at the policy and procedure level
6. Assessing the information and skills needed for training
7. Testing out the measurement/feedback/training needs/monitoring loop to see if it fits together (DeVries, Morrison, Shullman & Gulach, 1981).

These tasks are all dependent upon the purpose of PA in the institution and should reflect the stated purpose of PA. The organizational PA policy should respond to major issues and concerns and should be signed by an executive level administrator (preferably the President) in order to demonstrate top level support and commitment to the process. The policy statement should be distributed to all participants.

What knowledge, skills and abilities are required for effective PA? Learning needs assessment is a critical phase of this process and it has been in effect since the design phase. Much valuable information is garnered through individual and small group discussions as well as meetings. An essential part of any effective training process is the opportunity participants

have to critically reflect upon the information being presented. It should incorporate an opportunity to consider alternatives to the popularly prevailing norms governing PA and to be skeptical of definitive sets of principles of practice. Exemplary behaviors and conventionally accepted wisdom should be viewed as relative and provisional. Encouraging this critical review, although sometimes difficult to achieve or accept, will facilitate effective PA in the institution.

Needs assessment can also be accomplished through interviews with a representative number of participants from all institutional levels and units. This affords the participants an opportunity to invest in the PA process and help shape it. Another technique, suggested by Brookfield (1986), is 'critical incidents.' An indirect way to have participants identify real concerns, problems and feelings, critical incidents enable the respondent to think in specific terms and identify problems without revealing themselves publicly. The following is an example of a critical incident exercise for PA training:

> Think about a performance problem you are experiencing. It can be your own or an employee's. Write down, in no more than half a page, the following details: a) what is the performance problem and why is it significant, b) who (not necessarily names, but roles of individuals) is involved; c) when and where does it occur.

The result of this exercise gives a wide angle snapshot of employee performance problems in the institution and provides valuable information for training design and program material development. It also identifies institutional issues, concerns and problems which will affect the PA process and should be considered throughout the implementation process.

Finally, does it all fit together? Does the process appear coordinated? Is the espoused purpose of PA reflected in the PA design and development? If there is a disjunction, it should be identified and addressed at this stage; if it is not it will become obvious at a later stage and may inhibit the process.

Installation and Training

Installation involves the introduction of the PA system to the institution. This phase should be accomplished by the training phase which is the critical element of implementation. There are several strategies which can be used to install the PA system; the key point to remember is that PA should relate to the operation of the institution. If the system has been designed as an ongoing part of the management of the institution, this can be accomplished. During the design phase effective supervisors who are respected in the institution have been identified and they should be involved in the installation and training phase. They may be asked to present a case study of their experience with PA in training sessions. Their participation in the training sessions is vital; having them at the sessions as participants facilitates the teaching-learning transaction for they have valuable experiences with PA in the institution. It is no longer a theoretical discussion; it is now an example of professional practice that works in the institution.

Throughout the literature the importance of training is emphasized; yet it is also recognized as an uncommon practice. Given the important role the participants play in the PA process, it is difficult to understand why training is

overlooked in implementation. Although expense is often cited as the reason, when the investment of time, money and energy to PA system design is considered, this additional cost and its resultant benefits can be assessed in the proper perspective. Perhaps this is why so many PA systems fall short of their intended goals. When the key cast of characters are not given an opoportunity to share the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for effective PA, there is little incentive to participate beyond the letter of the process. The spirit of the process is what brings it alive and contributes to success.

There are some important points to make concerning training. It is an ongoing process that is formal and informal. Formal training sessions should be held to introduce the program, and to refresh participants PA skills and knowledge as well as provide an opportunity for critical reflection. Informal training is a day to day process; employees learn everyday at the workplace. Workplace learning can inhibit or enhance formal training as well as the entire PA process. That is why each supervisor should be responsible and accountable for employee development. Formal training opportunities are usually infrequent; the informal learning environment is always available.

Formal training should include the following information:

.Rationale of the PA program
.Policies and procedures of the PA program
.Discussion of the terms on the PA forms
.Performance measurement skills
.Feedback/communication skills

This should not be an information giving session; these elements should be discussed and critically reviewed by the participants. Much learning can take place during these sessions for the

participants and for the institution. What clarifications, revisions and/or changes are necessary in the PA program? How can they be made? Involving the participants on a continuing basis reinforces the collaborative nature of PA. When participants are afforded the opportunity to explore PA, to share their perspectives and concerns, many potential roadblocks, both internal and external, are removed. Giving the participants an opportunity to test PA skills in a supportive environment will also diminish some of the concerns.

Employee training is another important element of the process. Employees have been found to participate more actively and constructively in their own PA, providing active, ongoing monitoring of the system. PA is not something being done to them; it is a process in which they collaborate and participate. There is also a sense that informed employees may be likely to maintain the quality of the PA process for it is seen as developmental and helpful. Involved employees will keep their supervisors informed and see them as helpers/facilitators. This can only happen when employees are included in PA; a system that does not "belong" to them does not encourage participation.

Pilot Testing

It is suggested that a representative unit be selected for pilot testing the PA system. Bernardin (1979) found that this was a helpful step in implementing a PA system in a large organization. Problems can be addressed at this stage and success can enhance installation in the other units.

If pilot testing is not possible, it is suggested that the installation process begin at the top and work down through the

institution. In this way senior and executive administration can act as role models, encouraging the employees to participate in the PA implementation. This support and commitment also makes PA important to institutional members.

Maintenance

The maintenance phase of PA implementation keeps PA active and visible in the institution, providing the necessasry encouragement and support. Consideration of a system to keep the PA system vital includes monitoring, coaching and counselling, and support networks. DeVries et al (1981) suggest the use of a second level review process in order to encourage employees to conduct appraisals as an effective maintenance procedure. This approach not only keeps the responsibility for PA with the participants, but it further reinforces PA as a supervisory responsibility. They also suggest that employees can play an important maintenance function by periodically requesting informal or formal appraisal of their job performance. Encouraging employee and supervisory collaboration creates a support structure which facilitates and enhances the PA system.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the PA system should be a formative process; as described in the previous phases of implementation it is an important characteristic of each element. DeVries et al (1981) suggest four questions which should be answered in PA system evaluation:

1. Was the system introduced and installed as designed?
2. Are employees using the system as it was designed to be used?

3. Are the system's intended purposes and outcomes being accomplished?

4. Does the PA system fit within the organizational context, particularly in terms of other human resource programs? (p.108).

They make the valuable distinction that an appraisal process does not have to meet the requirements of formal research to be considered functional. What is important is that PA be understandable to those who use it. Since each institution is unique, with its own cultural system and history, a PA system which works successfully in another institution or one which is described as an exemplary model of PA practice will probably not be amenable to wholesale implemention in each institution. Finally, they note that PA program implementation requires that employees have a) at least one good reason to try PA, b) adequate skills to use PA, and c) a way to make PA an ongoing part of their jobs (p.109).

Summary, Conclusions and Implications

PA is a process which carries with it all the potential for effective performance management in organizations and as such the search for a truly effective system often resembles the pursuit for the Holy Grail. It is a highly complex activity which must consider contextual variables; hence the Holy Grail of PA cannot exist. Individuals, organizations, cultures, strengths and weaknesses are different; thus, the consideration of PA must include these differences and be reflected in the implementation process. Kahalas (1980) notes that purpose, relevance, process and program management are the key ingredients to be considered; yet most of the research focuses on measurement and technique.

The proposed PA implementation model is based upon an employee growth and development approach. It considers change as a process and utilizes an adult education approach to change implementation. As developed, PA is a process of helping others learn, grow and develop in the workplace through participation, involvement and collaboration in an atmosphere of mutual respect and critical reflection.

PA, as a learning experience, has risk elements. Supervisors risk being "found out" concerning their managerial skills; employees risk a great deal, too. Each enters the process with those risks in mind. Recognizing and addressing them will enhance the process and the credibility of each participant to the other. But this takes time and trust, which must evolve. Trust cannot be mandated; it grows through the development of a relationship in which support, communication, collaboration and problem solving are the foundation. When the supervisor is defined as a learning helper, utilizing a variety of strategies including teacher, resource, knowledge/skill specialist, coach, counsellor, and/or facilitator, the workplace learning environment can be enhanced. Individuals grow and develop in a dynamic way which changes from situation to situation. A person may need more support and guidance in one area and less in another. This may also change over time and this should be recognized.

Communication is vital to learning, including support, information and evaluation indicators. These are also the critical PA elements. This process is not one of continual

agreement; it recognizes differences and diversity and this should be considered by the participants. Critical reflection can be threatening as well as enpowering. PA, like adult education, is based upon a collaborative, participative involvement of participants in which responsibility is with all participants. Although this can contribute to employees seeing themselves in a broader context in which they do not take their position and location in the institution for granted, this can be disorienting and threatening. Recognition of the risks and benefits is very important to effective PA.

This model for implementation of a PA process focuses on the primary purpose and context of the system in the institution. Clarification, understanding and acceptance of the underlying reasons for PA is the starting point of the design process. This is accomplished through the participation, involvement and responsibility of all the participants. This PA implementation model is a valuable process for employee growth and development which emphasizes two-way communication between supervisor and employee. Evaluation is informally conducted on a daily basis; the PA process outlined here suggests a formal communication between the supervisor and the employee in which expectations are expressed and clarified. The unique collegial nature of higher education institutions lends itself to a collaborative process of employee growth and development.

The model utilizes an adult education process based upon a collaborative, participative involvement of employees who are encouraged to take responsibility for defining and meeting goals, problem posing and solving and being proactive in advocating

change and innovation. It builds upon the PA literature which reinforces the necessary role of all participants in the process. The sharing of power and responsibility for managing the work is an empowering prospect. The employee self management approach is fostered by more than a humanistic philosophy; technological change, learner institutions and the highly educated workforce with expectations of participation and involvement are all creating conditions which accommodate this approach.

It is anticipated that the approach presented in the model will generate a willingness on the part of institutional decision makers to consider alternatives to the ever-more popular PA mythology. Alternatives should be considered in the light of each institution and its contextual nature. PA is a communication and feedback process for employees and it is just that--a process. The techniques and models are dependent upon the purpose and process designed by the institution. Carroll and Schneier (1982) describe the impact of organizational characteristics, on performance appraisal systems, including the open and closed systems perspectives, organizational subsystems and the external and internal environment. These characteristics play a vital role in the determination and implementation of a performance management system. These characteristics also play a vital role in adult learning. The focus on implementation should consider design, development, installation, training, pilot testing, maintenance and evaluation within the context of each unique institution. PA is not a perfect process; but it does offer the possibility of greater learning and effectiveness in the workplace when it utilizes an adult education approach.

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